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DDCI  
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**MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs**

**SUBJECT: National Reconnaissance Program**

1. You have asked for my comments on the report submitted by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on May 2, 1964 concerning the National Reconnaissance Program.

2. In many respects I have found the conclusions of this report constructive and helpful. However, the proposed Presidential Directive contains certain organizational proposals which do not seem to me calculated to provide the most productive possible utilization of national resources for the reconnaissance effort of the government. If these proposals are adopted, I do not believe that it will be possible to discharge the responsibilities which the report itself envisages for the Director of Central Intelligence or that the Central Intelligence Agency can perform the mission which the report apparently contemplates for the Agency.

3. I believe that certain basic principles must be established and recognized if, as the conclusions of the report state, the reconnaissance program is to "be conducted as a national effort geared to meet as effectively as possible overriding national intelligence needs." The conclusions of the report correctly characterize the National

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Reconnaissance Program as a "vitally important enterprise" which must be conducted as a "national effort," the national character of which "must be maintained through a joint endeavor on the part of the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the United States Intelligence Board." The problem is to delineate clearly the roles and responsibilities of CIA and the Defense Department in support of a national program while maintaining its character as a "joint endeavor."

4. Some of the principles which I have in mind find support in some of the language of the report but appear to be obscured and contradicted elsewhere in the report, particularly by the implications of provisions in the proposed Presidential Directive. I consider it important to identify these principles as clearly as possible as I am convinced that their adoption is an essential prerequisite to a reconnaissance effort conducted for national intelligence purposes on a collaborative basis which makes maximum use of all resources available to the government. These principles are defined and discussed in the following paragraphs:

A. The DCI should participate fully in the formulation of the National Reconnaissance Plan and in decisions relating to the assignment and implementation of responsibilities and

the allocation of resources under the plan.

The effectiveness of our reconnaissance program depends upon an intimate interrelationship between intelligence requirements and priorities, and the development and utilization of the effort and resources necessary to satisfy these requirements. Essential ingredients of the program are (in addition to the identification of targets, the establishment of collection schedules and processing of the take): (a) assignment of responsibility for research and development to produce new and improved collection systems, (b) allocation of responsibility for specific operational activity, (c) budgeting and programming to finance individual activities, and (d) review and correction of operational or technical deficiencies in the implementation of program responsibilities.

Decisions in all of these areas contribute to a vital intelligence effort and require the participation of the DCI. It is essential that these decisions should not be influenced by other considerations than the need for maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the reconnaissance program, and that this program should not suffer for lack of informed support from the official of the government primarily charged with responsibility for

intelligence activities. The ultimate responsibility of the DCI for identifying and evaluating Soviet weapons technology, strategic military deployment and other threats of critical significance to national security, makes it essential that he should have an adequate voice in basic decisions relating to the reconnaissance program which is the basic source of intelligence on these matters.

The conclusions of the Board's report are not necessarily incompatible with these views and certain paragraphs are in full consonance with them. For example the report enjoins (page 9) "close and continuing collaboration between the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence with a view to ensuring" (a) the most productive possible utilization of national resources; (b) opportunities for the Director of Central Intelligence to survey progress under the program; and (c) evaluation of the need for new reconnaissance systems. The responsibilities and prerogatives implied by this language, however, are nullified by other provisions of the report and are not reflected in the proposed Presidential Directive. For one thing, the program is defined as "a single program . . . for the development, management, control and operation of all projects" (Recommendation 1, page 7) and primary responsibility

and authority for "the management and conduct of reconnaissance activities" and "the tasking of personnel, facilities and other resources of the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies" is vested in the Secretary of Defense (Recommendation 2, page 7). Recommendation 3 (page 8) provides for the delegation of the Secretary of Defense's responsibilities to "a Director responsible solely to the Secretary of Defense."

The net effect of these recommendations is to obscure the role and authority of the DCI in decisions which affect the utilization of resources, the allocation of responsibilities and funds, and the scheduling and direction of missions.

B. The DCI should continue to review the program and obviously requires staff support.

The role and authority of the DCI is impaired and obscured by the paragraph of the Board's report which relates to the use of so-called "monitors" under the NRO agreement. The NRO agreement provides that the Secretary of Defense and the DCI "may designate appropriate officials . . . to examine and monitor on their behalf the activities of" the NRO. The Board's report recommends (Recommendation 8, page 9) that "In lieu

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of the monitor and review functions provided for" in the present NRO agreement the Executive Agent for the program (i.e., the Secretary of Defense) shall hereafter report to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs and the President's Board, "concerning all aspects of the program" etc. The significance of this recommendation is not clear. The "monitor and review provisions" in the NRO agreement were intended to provide the Secretary of Defense and the DCI with the staff support and representation necessary to enable them to discharge their responsibilities for reviewing and directing the program. To say that "in lieu" of these provisions the Secretary of Defense (as Executive Agent) shall report to the President's Special Assistant and the Board obviously has no meaning. Reports concerning the program can and should be made to the President's Special Assistant and to the President's Board in any event. For his own purposes and to ensure his own effective participation in the over-all supervision of the program, the DCI (and presumably also the Secretary of Defense) must be free to utilize deputies, assistants and staff to any extent necessary.

C. The research and development potentialities of CIA should be fully utilized..

The report recognizes the importance of full utilization of the facilities developed by CIA for the invention and development of new systems.

The report speaks of the "invaluable experience" of the Central Intelligence Agency which "has assembled a nucleus of scientific and technological talent, all of which can be brought to bear in introducing into the National Reconnaissance Program more effective means for the collection and processing of intelligence data." (Conclusion 5, page 5). The report further recommends appropriate action to ensure "that full utilization be made of the resources of" the Central Intelligence Agency as well as the Department of Defense "for the conduct of research projects looking to the development of new and improved aircraft and satellite reconnaissance vehicles, photographic and other sensors," etc. (Recommendation 6, page 9).

The importance which is apparently attached to a contribution by the Central Intelligence Agency to the development of new systems suggests the need for a mechanism calculated to ensure such a contribution. Unless, however, provision is made for full participation by the DCI in decisions relating to the allocation of responsibility for research and development

and for funding these activities, there can be no assurance that CIA will in fact be given assignments for research on particular systems appropriate to its capabilities.

**D. The Central Intelligence Agency's contribution to satellite reconnaissance should include responsibility for development and production as well as research for new systems.**

I do not believe that the "cutting edge" of advance thinking can be preserved within the Central Intelligence Agency if its role is confined to research and if the "responsibility for the management, over-all systems engineering, procurement and operation of all satellite reconnaissance systems" be assigned to the Air Force as proposed (Recommendation 5, page 10) in the Board's report. If this procedure is followed, we should recognize that we have decided as a matter of policy to place responsibility for future reconnaissance operations and improvements on a "single instrument basis" in the hands of the Air Force.

The Central Intelligence Agency should be charged not only with advance planning and research in specified areas of overhead reconnaissance, both satellite and aircraft, but should maintain a continuing responsibility for the development and



production of the new systems developed. Delivery of individual "payloads" can then be made, as needed, on a requisitioned basis, to the organization charged with the conduct of individual operations. Under such an arrangement continued growth and improvement in the systems can be expected, comparable to the process we have witnessed in the U-2 and the CORONA programs. Conversely, if responsibility for production of the system is removed from those responsible for its initial invention and turned over to others, motivation for continuing improvement will be seriously impaired. I am not impressed with the arguments of those who maintain that the organization responsible for actual operations must have control of production of the "payload." Many years of practical experience in business and government have convinced me that operations can be successfully conducted using components (in this case the "payload") which are furnished to the operating entity by some other organization.

E. Program responsibility and operational assignments should be levied upon the Central Intelligence Agency through normal command channels.

The Board's report is somewhat ambiguous on this point.

Recommendation 2 (page 7) confers upon the Secretary of Defense, as Executive Agent for the program, authority for "the tasking of personnel, facilities and other resources of . . . the Central Intelligence Agency." A later provision of the report (Recommendation 4, page 10) proposes to empower the Secretary of Defense to delegate authority "for the levying of requests upon the Central Intelligence Agency." Ambiguity in this respect should be resolved and the principle clearly established that any tasks or assignments levied upon or allocated to the Central Intelligence Agency should be transmitted through normal command channels although informal working relationships should of course be encouraged.

5. I believe that establishment of the principles which I have described above is an essential prerequisite to an effective national reconnaissance program. I therefore recommend that these principles be accepted for incorporation in a revised agreement governing the national reconnaissance effort and that instructions be issued accordingly.